There were two presentations:

I. Irlen Syndrome/Scotopic Sensitivity ([http://www.irlen.com](http://www.irlen.com)) by Heidi Baldassare, DSPS-R323, 452-5487

II. Non-Verbal Classroom Management Strategies ([www.michaelgrinder.com](http://www.michaelgrinder.com)) by Kate Swobodo.

I. Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome (SSS) also known as the Irlen Syndrome is a type of visual perceptual problem. Helen Irlen, school psychologist for 15 yrs in 80's now working at Cal State Long Beach Learning Disabilities Program first identified this disability. These individuals suffer from reading fatigue, red and watery eyes which is not caused by vision problems but from a visual perception disability where the students “sees the printed page differently and must constantly adapt to distortions appearing on the printed page”. Students report that words seem to float off the page or that words swirl causing them to often lose their place, read slower and get physically sick as often they get headaches and stomach aches. It also affects copying, reading music, working on a computer, night driving and comfort level working under fluorescent lights.

In the past these symptoms were identified but not helped with traditional reading techniques used by learning disabilities specialists.

Helen Irlen found that using colored overlays on the text had immediate affect on reading abilities. Screening for this scotopic sensitivity can be done antidotal and or by going through a series of tasks that exacerbate the symptoms to see if the students exhibit this sensitivity quickly.

On the website you can download a Self-Test for Irlen Syndrome and also complete an online shorter version.

Interesting Statistics:
12-14% of general population has SSS
46% of individuals with significant reading problems (ADD) have SSS
No gender or ethnic differences
Genetic component-parent often has the same syndrome as child…

2/3rd of dyslexia have SSS
1/3rd do not have SSS

For more information call Heidi and/or check out the excellent website.

II. Non-verbal classroom management

Michael Grinder can find the material presented in “ENVOY/7 Gems”. This book focuses on non-verbal classroom management.

We were reminded that 93% of communication is nonverbal communication.
Often students’ getting off task is due to insecurity, and students might exhibit behavior problems rather than admit that have learning issues. Often their goal is to get attention even if it’s negative. Another insight shared was that teachers are not as clear as they could be, and, therefore, students become confused which often leads to disruptive behavior.

Non-verbal classroom management gives teachers more options with dealing with students who might have problems.

Ms Swoboda shared that she has found that this method often diffuses potential classroom conflicts. It doesn’t solve everything, but they are tools we can use that have an effect on the quality of student behavior and learning. The methods are used to get attention, instruction, transitions, and group work.

1. Getting Attention
   A. Freeze Body.
      a) When giving directions, teachers often move around. It is better to stay still when giving directions helping students to focus on instructions.
      b) Three minutes before class is over freeze body and review what has been taught or what the homework assignment is.
   
   B. Above (pause) Whisper…. When students are noisy, instead of screaming over them, pause and whisper getting their attention.

2. Teaching Mode
   A. Raise Hand vs. Speak Out
      a) Looking at and pointing to the hand, say something like “You need to listen to me right now.”
      b) When you have to say something frequently to students use laminated cards and show students the cards eliminating any conversation.

3. Transitions
   A. Always give exit directions-time consuming at the front end but pays in the back end. This means that you spend a couple of minutes giving specific instructions writing them on the board. (Page numbers, questions to be answered). Go over any questions before students begin assignment.
   B. M.I.T.S. (combine with exit directions) Most important twenty seconds-freeze body right after you give instructions. Point to the board, diffusing any potential confrontations. In these 20 seconds, you can glance to see if anyone doesn’t understand

4. Seat Work/Group Work
   A. Off (neutral) ON
      When Ss are off task, we approach them and not get them on task.
      Example: Student 1 is on task but student 2 who is nearby is not. Teacher approaches Student 1, looks at student’s work and says something like “Good job” and possibly discuss with Student 1 some good points. The longer the teacher stays nearby, Student 2 will begin to do his/her own work. At that point, teacher then approaches Student 2 and has a dialogue with that student.
Other tips:
- Assign things at the beginning of class encouraging students to come on time.
- When student walk in late, don’t look over to them.
- Look to the class and then look to the board.

Kate gave out a handout. If you are interested, e-mail Maria at marosale@ccsf.edu, and she will send it to you via interoffice mail.